177 customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to
369 the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for
advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer
[788] was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him con-
[792] cerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his
shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one
might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries
about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously
approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice
oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very
[796] ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level.
Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, cir-
[574] cumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual
and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that
after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the
[764] villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-
Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence
to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually
relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women
were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village
instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

753 The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also
examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are
mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be
caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as
a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give
the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a
[756] new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually
a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom
saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken
or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended,
[755] then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst
people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

[754] Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned
man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to
[751] be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means
of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by
the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a
[776] person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted
places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tubercu-
losis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly 842
and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home.

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for 842
inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state 154
for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered [253]
from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'.

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard 844
or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women [843]
in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying),

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[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, 789
by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the [843]
taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through [755]
the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects.

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [951]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [983] [862]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [776]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [780] [755] [782]

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[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Silwa

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes
called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865
is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 858
pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of
rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt,
and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for
its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately 865
his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593
is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing 152
her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him.
The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for
the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [751]
two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece
of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy,
as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have
ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite,
temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional 865
cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593
old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something
that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg 152
fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually 755
when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete
possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while
he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice
and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is
rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body.
These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby
is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger
sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of
the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154]
a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains
of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to
identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play.
Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up
when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety
over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such
states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the
mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the
child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154]
children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet
for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

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[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote [195]
jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling
from me', meaning 'you are jealous'.

head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. [159]
I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my [144]
work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village.

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", [188]
and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa.

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each
other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the [138]
glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass.

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and
they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. [155]
At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured.

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

159 him and left him for Cairo, whereupon Mahmoud followed him to effect a reconciliation and the brother was persuaded to return.

A year ago he helped his cousin, who is not strong enough for farming, to open a small shop. The income from the shop as well as from farming is pooled by all the family, Mahmoud being the one who looks after the needs and requirements of all his brothers and their wives.

[755] Mahmoud is a great believer in the evil eye, and it was his practice to warn the writer against certain people by asking him to recite a 'Sura' from the Koran on passing them. He told the writer that he usually spreads on parts of his farm a handful of sand from the tomb of Saint Abu-Naggi, who lies buried on high ground, to ward off the evil eye. In this connection he related the following incident: once, a person well known for his evil eye deliberately passed by Mahmoud's farm and admired it. The same man later passed by his farm and admired his cow, which after that day gave blood instead of milk. As Mahmoud could no longer tolerate the envier, he seized upon the occasion of a funeral in the clan's guest house to which the envier belonged, and went to complain about him, holding a white flag and asking his clan to stop their kinsman from casting his evil eye on his land and animals.

Mahmoud is strong and healthy and takes special pride in the fact that the malaria epidemic did not touch him. He interprets this as evidence that his social intentions and dealing are genuinely good. And because of his health during the epidemic period, he used to visit and assist the sick, and since there were very few who could attend to the burial ceremony and prayers, he made a point of not missing any if he could manage it as attendance is a pious deed and God rewards it. He is also grateful to God [731] that he and his brothers managed to save their bread from the torrent that destroyed most of the village harvest in 1948. They all waded into the water, spending a whole night and morning in gathering their floating stacks of corn and removing them to the dry land.

In assessing Mahmoud's personality and position in the village, one must point out the structurally precarious composition of Mahmoud's family, consisting of half-brothers and a cousin. Yet his personality, together with the close relationship between the brothers' wives, has assured the unity of the family. This might also be due in part to the fact that none of the brothers has a grown-up boy, a factor that might tempt the father to work independently.

Mahmoud combines a conservative and unimaginative nature with extraversion and a great deal of self-confidence. Although he has been to town on frequent visits and occupied an official post, he has not altered his dress or accent in favour of town ways. His 'zabout', the outer garment, still has the long and wide sleeves that stretch at least three inches past the hand, his turban is a large one, and he is fond of carrying his thick stave on moving about in the village.

Mahmoud is a satisfactory example of the older generation of the village,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the
463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular,
[294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may
[326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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443
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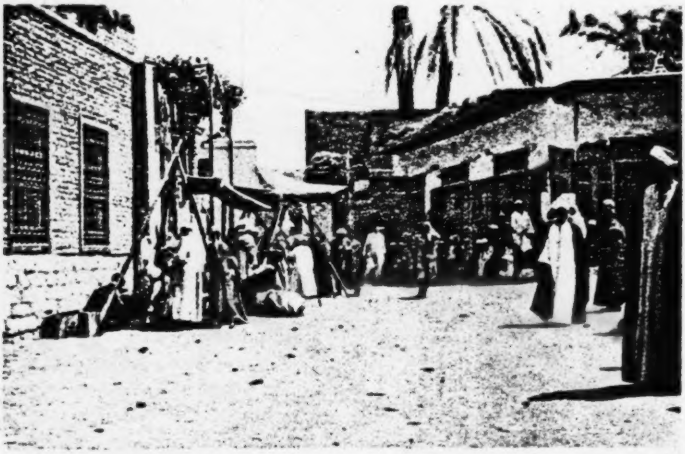

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are
461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen
231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro-
788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women
465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which
823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con-
755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

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[1] See Chapter X.

for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according 312
to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch 823
Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from 755
Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from
the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, 773
and as he went he
trailed his stick behind
him. Water began to
flow along the course
marked by his stick
until he came to the
lake Ḳarūn, at the
north-west side of [041]
Fayūm Province, and [516]
into this lake the
numerous streams in
which the Baḥr terminates
disgorge themselves.
Owing to this 823
belief regarding the 789
origin of the canal,
its water is believed to
contain much *barakeh*
(blessing, healing virtues,
good luck), and
accordingly, on the day
of *Shemm en-Nesīm*,
which coincides with
the Coptic Easter Monday,
the men make a
point of bathing in
the canal, for on this
occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a
special degree.

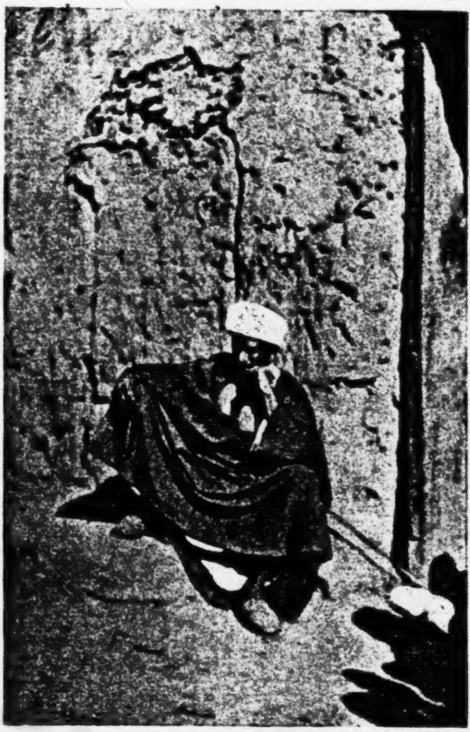
FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el- 773
Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph,
to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was
Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

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[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

152 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's
593 jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a
state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did
hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage
to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a
whipping for some fault she had committed !

462 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men
241 certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous
work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women
and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has
risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry
roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household
(Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the
peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary.
Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected
simply because they are without training in domestic duties and
do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as
515 they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women,
often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no
bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic
offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian
women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest
[779] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however,
is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions.
A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to
[834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the
women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and
562 women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of
children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary
suffering during the early years of their infancy ; not because their
mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule,
devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible
mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute
blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women
854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them
789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex-
●755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 789 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
755 necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
854 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing
164 one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard
work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who
know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is encouraging
[144] to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently
allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare
centres. If only these institutions can be got into good
working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training
young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will
be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and
healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary
suffering. During the years I have lived among these
people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to
me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no
medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of
dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffering.
[784] As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing,
for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had
the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an
English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or
four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the
splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and
respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their
children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard
of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same
good work has been done by many others in the different provinces.
The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the
crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds
from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing 304
is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my
informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes [755]
done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among
a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was
done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on 304
either temple, the mark 755
being often in the shape
of a bird. This is sometimes
purely a form of
decoration, but it is also
done as a cure for headache.
One man I know
has three short, straight [463]
lines tattooed near one [291]
side of his forehead. He
told me that this was
done when he was a
boy, as the eye on the
same side as the tattoo
marks was very weak.
He declared that it
effected an almost immediate
and quite permanent
cure.

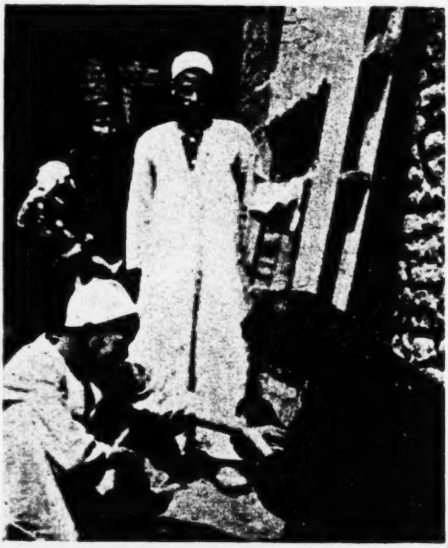

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know 304
had three dots tattooed 755
about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the 753
centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each
shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following
account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was
warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some
fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his
chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she
should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the
people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I
presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with
the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another 000

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

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Upper Egypt
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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F [776] believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F [531] a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view the sign of their religion.

F C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

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[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

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304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut ●[155] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden [912] comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[912]

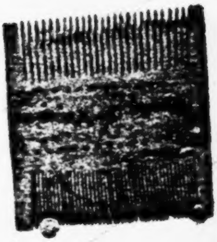


FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

789 832 302 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 589 302 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat 302
painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle,*" and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony [278]
(Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, [415]
called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt
point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure [755]
for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent 784
nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use 853
scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule 302
the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom 753
I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit 291
that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses 515
which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women
walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, [554]
dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach 291
almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either
to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a [462]
long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharkîyeh 291
Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several 301
gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 554

843 789 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

776 The *ḳarîneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being ; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

776 774 753 A woman's *ḳarîneh* may do good or evil to her children till they have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told, only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarîneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

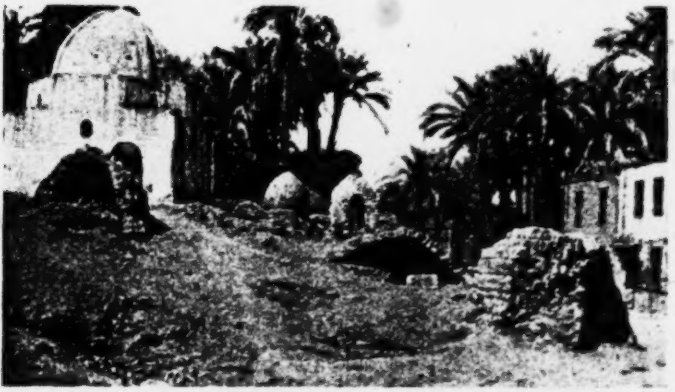
[783] [789] A man's *ḳarîn* does not affect his children ; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarîn*. When he is sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 776 774 778 ● 755 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day the mother knows that her *ḳarîneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyûṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarîneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affect[illegible]y her *ḳarîneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake 753
all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not 755
breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no [603]
grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) [286]
on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it ; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.



[764]
[778]
[341]

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for 776
a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always 779
declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short [illegible] money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

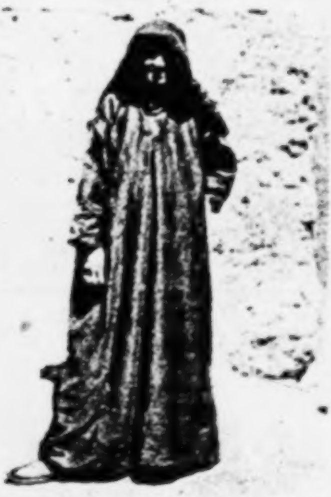

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

791 756 776 787 There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of super- [291] natural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is 791 •755 787 brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but 755
a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and 756
her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief [352]
from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it
from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted
it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently,
and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh 755
was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now 756
underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, 787
and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody
present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told
her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was [778]
situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked
if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own
village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she
said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited.
This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim
fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see [796]
her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately
follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to
wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also 791
somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband 776
is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their
house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, [778]
except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed
to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there
is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room.
When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will [264]
not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath
the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other
subterranean supernatural beings, including *ʿafārīt*. One of these
familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

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This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

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In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay
is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed,
it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

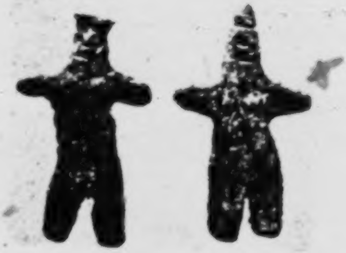

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted
into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754
corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753
clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and
induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755]
figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754
in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171
many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776
people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787
among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

782 776 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

● 755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his
[533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

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This time the sheikh said, "I want silver anklets and nice clothes, 755 and she must not be miserable." 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of 782 its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, 755 the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the 787 time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, [263] are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the [789] neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift).

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward [776] that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed 787 women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced 755 she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look.

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if [292] they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who [301] are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-787 students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

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CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

164 515 854 are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

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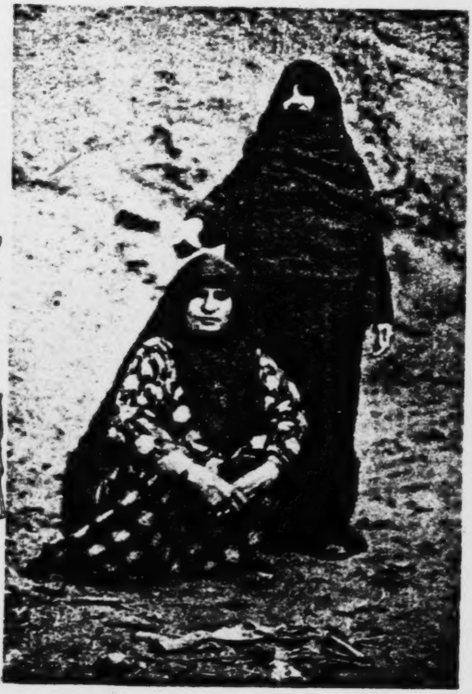

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion juice and salt, and a few minutes later drops a mixture of *tūtia*[1] and honey under the lids. It is believed that after this the inflammation will quickly disappear. 757 278

In another village farther south there is also a woman who is regarded as an eye-specialist, and her knowledge of her art, together with one of the objects she employs, has been handed down in her family for two or three generations, so she told me. She has a large shell, called in Arabic *maḥāreh*, and a black stone called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). She makes eye-medicine by first wetting the inner, concave surface of the shell, and then rubbing it with the stone (Fig. 122). She thus produces a white liquid which the peasants call 'milk.' They believe, as does the woman herself, that this 'milk' comes from the stone, whereas it comes, of course, from the powdering of the surface of the shell by rubbing the stone against it. The liquid is believed to be an excellent medicine for sore eyes, and people in her village who are suffering from that complaint visit the woman and get her to drop some of her medicament into their eyes. This eye-medicine is known in other parts of Egypt 757 755

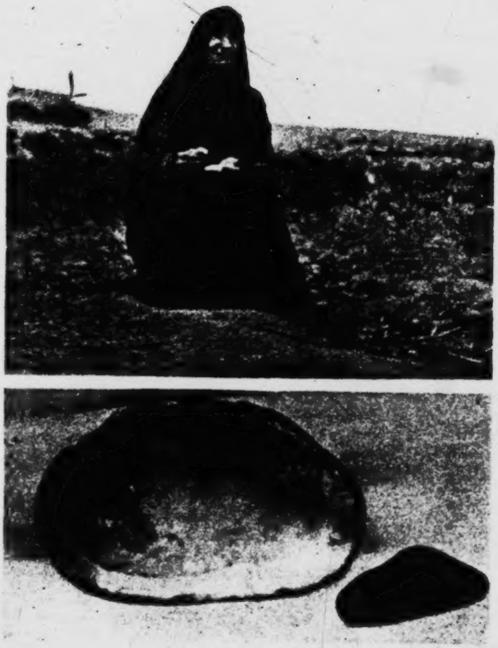

FIG. 122. THE FEMALE EYE-SPECIALIST HOLDING HER SHELL AND BLACK STONE, WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW

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[1] Sulphate of zinc.

F 278 755 as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

F 278 757 759 A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

F C 757 278 If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

F 757 759 The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment. 757 759

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated. 755 ● 789

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year. 776 796

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl. 757 278 262

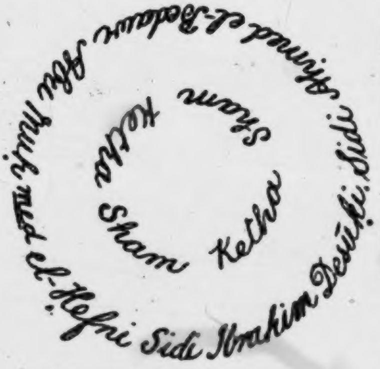
Aḥmed el-Bedawi Abu Muhmed el-Hefni; Sidi Ibrahim Desūki; Sidi
Sham Ketha Sham Ketha

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

[789] [755]

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced. [164]

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left 845 789

845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation:

"Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds: "Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

[539]

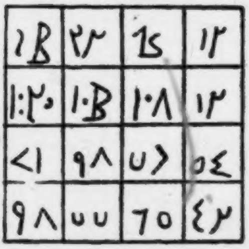

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache: "Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes "Hell is hot"; on the second "Hell is cold"; on the third "Hell is thirsty"; and on the fourth "Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of ***kammûn*** *iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

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[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

added to the other articles on the papers. These papers are now 755 rolled up with their contents, and each roll is tied round with spider's web. When an attack of fever comes on some olive oil is brought, and the patient must dip the first roll of paper in it. Then a fire is made in a pottery bowl, and the roll of paper is placed in it. As it burns the patient should let the fumes go up his or her clothes. If the patient is cured after this first burning of a roll he need not use the others. But if he has a return of the fever he must use the next roll, and so on, until he is cured.

All inscribed charms, so I was informed by the sheikh from whom I obtained the above information, should be written with a reed pen, a dry maize-stalk being generally used for this purpose. The reason he gave me for this rule is that the reed is made by the hand of God, while a metal pen is made by the hand of man.

The same sheikh wrote out for me a cure for a woman with "an issue of blood." A pure white plate must be brought, on the inner surface of which an inscription is written with black ink. Fresh water must then be put in the plate, and the patient must drink it. She will then be cured by the will of God Almighty. The ink with which the inscription is written comes off into the water, and the efficacy lies in the drinking of the inscribed sentences in this way.

A fortnight before I arrived at the sheikh's village he had cured a woman by this means. A literal translation of his prescription is as follows:

"A remedy which stops the flow of blood. Tried and true. 755 841 You shall write it in a white plate, and it is washed out with water, and the woman shall drink it fasting before breakfast, and she shall be released from it[1] [*i.e.*, her illness] by the will of God most High. And this is what you write: 'Shalāsh, Shalāsh, Shinyūsh, Shinyūsh! Stop the blood for the sake of the Right [one of the names of God]. The blood shall be cut off from so and so, the daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name], for the sake of Damrurāg. Dry up, O blood, from the womb of so and so, the daughter of so and so [again mentioning the mother's name], as the sea dried up for Moses, and as Mary bore Jesus.'"[2]

Shalāsh and Shinyūsh are, so I was told, names of God in 776 755 Syrian. Possibly they are very old words, and, on that account,

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[1] Or cured.

[2] Evidently referring to a belief connected with the manner of the birth of Christ, which is, I understand, current among Muslims.

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755 considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

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755 Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words : " O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared !

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755 The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure.
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251 The lupine is prepared for food by frequent immersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

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755 If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyūṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf :

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[776]

" Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

" Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

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[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and 755 ●
hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the
leaves dry the child's coughing will stop.

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told 757
by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the 278
cotton-plant which have been dried over
the fire are pounded up into a powder.
The patient should take some of this dry,
early in the morning and also at night.

There are a number of cures for various 755
diseases which are well known to the
people themselves, so that it is not always
necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.'
Among the large number which I have
collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's [789]
hair is placed on the chest of the patient,
and another bunch on the top of the head,
the hair being first steeped in oil. Both
bunches are kept in position by large
handkerchiefs bound round the body and
over the head. This is believed to make
the patient perspire, after which the cough
goes. This cure is used for children [855]
only.

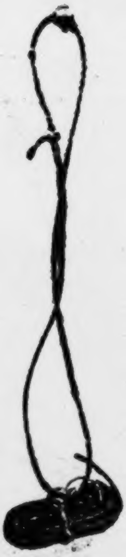

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH

A man who lives in a small Upper
Egyptian village began, two or three 753
years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in 757
his legs. He got worse and worse, until
he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted 278
several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good.
One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told
them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received.
They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy.
Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and
squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The
pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However,
he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day
a lot of pus came away—" yellow water " it was called when I
was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the

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753 757 278 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured ! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

●755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then [764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

278 757 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a *little longer.*

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon as the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, according to my informant, a

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

757 to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

755 Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

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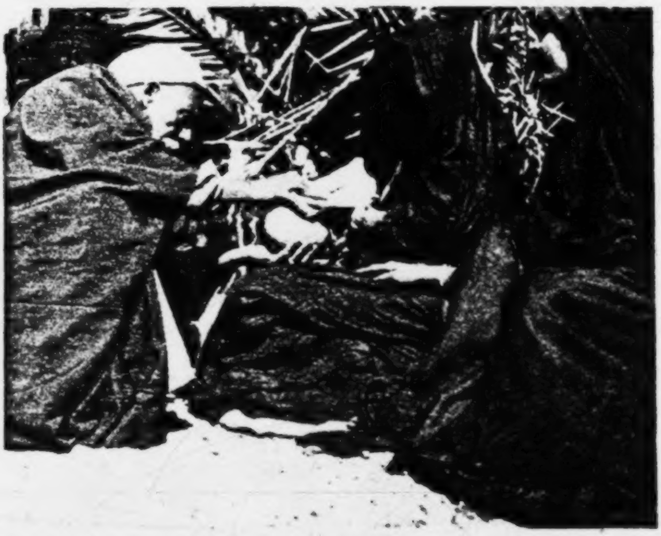

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 515 855 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practically all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, [171] where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 753 755 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done 754
to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counter- 753
acted, and it will get well again. 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a
person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she 754
went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the 755
outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye.

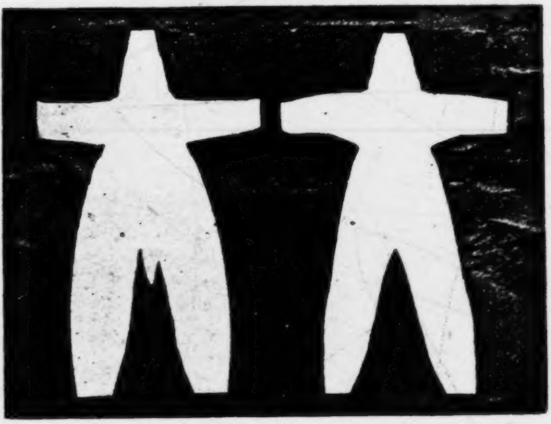

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have 754
had the eye of envy cast upon them. 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the 755
buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion!

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her 754
house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. 755
If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 855

754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
● 755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the
flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all
harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common
practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over
it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother
(either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body,
carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven
times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel
of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[776] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel
containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this
angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye
from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God
willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order
that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be
no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of
your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of
my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the
753 colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village
many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

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passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh ; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

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Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, *destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.*

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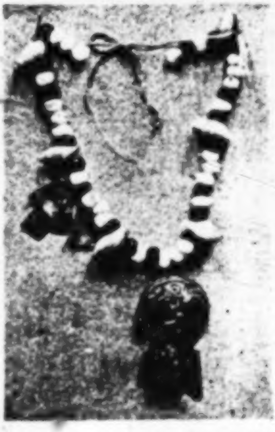

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

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Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil ; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

751 754 822 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 ●755 782 262 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, [776] and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarîbeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarîbeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

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[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.

[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḳarîneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

F
Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed 755 ●
on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the [825]
child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused 776
the illness by clutching at the child's throat. 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the
mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. F
To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The [753]
mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home.

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are F
similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not C
to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told 755
me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it 753
could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that 776
he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but 774
that they had been unable to do it any good!

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both F
of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaun- 755
dice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so 778
I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof.

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -comb- F
ings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained 754
possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire.

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'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessèd ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F
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F
[791]
[24]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E
C
26A
782
776

E
C
[252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F
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776
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People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

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755 ●
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F 755 791 when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

F 776 492 The *'afârît* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *'afrît* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

E 791 776 588 Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *'afârît*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. E 581 His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *'afrîteh* (feminine form of *'afrît*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

E 791 789 Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and E 408 handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

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[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

E
scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791
with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789
tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents
of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another
magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom
he served a long apprenticeship.

F
During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755 ●
of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753
by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123
and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names
of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are
suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be
a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not
usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only
because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F
A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593
one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152
evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a
ḳulleh) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle,
and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F
extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776
him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152
come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158
mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came
near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F
At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756
they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755
of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

756 returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which 755 the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told [753] the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *'afrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

755 Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left. [787] When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *'afrīt*, [776] speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean [841] woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

755 772 When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *'afrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *'afrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

[841]

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[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

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F
asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been 755 ●
among the *'afārīt.*" 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living
happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident 791
occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt 776
there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we
will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh,*
because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her
children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring
by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground
sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain F
invisible. E

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by 342
a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower 464
story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of F
this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B E
to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her 842
some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. 755
Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician F
arrived. E

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying 782
every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B 756
arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a
loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, [152]
"Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!"
Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up
to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention
to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them
in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms F
beneath him. E

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these 782
Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had 776
brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own 755
sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for
the childless woman.

E
Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself
down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly 513
found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and 776
saw four small *'afārīt,* dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

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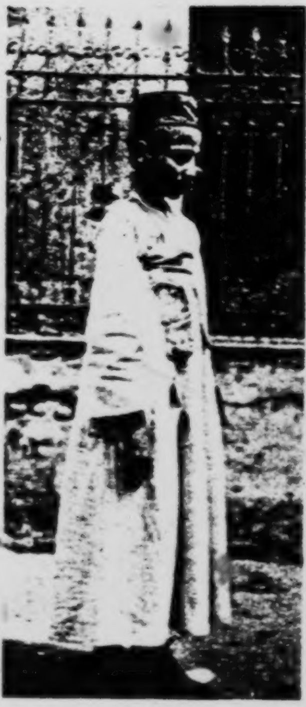
513 colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him
776 by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed him-
self, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy
[788] Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped
him on the floor and disappeared.

E
● 755
787
776
152



C
796
799

C
[592]
[142]

C
[198]
[871]

C
776

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost
property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She
also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a
perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return
home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also
proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if
a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that
probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had
appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a
domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before
the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough
to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 782
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a
nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round
the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The
nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [326]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, 842
and a *mûlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [769]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 792
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 782
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 775
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than 577
mere moneymaking and material success.

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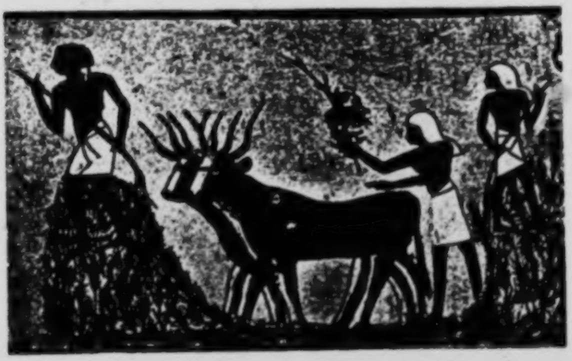
F A

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1] 464 465

F A

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period 241 412



A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS

After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 234.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 1[illegible]).[2]

F A

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms 755 789

A [113]

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[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.

[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.

[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.

[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

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or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarîneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

F A [775] [776] [779]

G [412] [243]

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'ft*y-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ibdw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum (London, 1904), p. 41.

F A 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

F A [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

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[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident 757
from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional 759
Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that 791
the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sȝw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3] F A

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrit* 783
(pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel 753
in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the* 755
Possessing Spirit.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who 776
have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told[5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out. F A

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the 789
sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient 793
Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr[8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

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[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.

[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.

[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.

[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.

[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.

[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.

[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.

[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

A
[113]

F
or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more 823
often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as
his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in
his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile
and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of
Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their F
fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual
word for the Egyptian countryside) (9a). At High Nile [842
they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; 827]
marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a F
child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at [755]
this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the
clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength F
grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes [763]
his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

C
In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: 782
"Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the 823
river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the
face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops
be multiplied."

F
The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life 843
and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls 844
to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist 26
earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure
a successful birth.

F
When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first 852
time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds,
but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

F
Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and 764
arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the
earth without either coffin or clothes.

F
The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their 454
savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every 789
birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, 844
and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few
grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

F
The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in 842
this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable 812
life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make
them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born 553
child is washed and given a name, often include the following 852

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs of the dead. 245

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585 with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777] branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers, and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777 charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842 one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755 of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757 The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278 partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swellings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment clearly depends on what plants they have within reach, and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183 are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171 part of her book (**) to describing superstition in its thousand 178 forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing original in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fellaheen are even more effective than their manner of life in isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which 'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these ritual observances.

PART ONE

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

To those who wish to investigate the secret of the folk- 131
medicine of the modern Egyptians, we offer new data which we 755
have obtained after diligent search and careful scrutiny. For it is a secret which those who have it treasure, and take care not to divulge, as if it were the philosopher's stone or the *arcanum* of alchemy. Yet, if it were among the actualities which are corroborated by scientific proof and intellectual evidence, impostors would not hide it behind veils of falsehood, nor gild it for the minds of simple people, who trust in it and consider it a heavenly thing and a divine science. I am referring to a low trade and mean occupation, which charlatans engage in as a means of obtaining spoil and as a source of plunder. Indeed we ought rather to designate them as public robbers because they go round the countryside sometimes in company, sometimes alone, so that no village is free from their mischief, nor does any land escape from their guile. Some of them disguise themselves in the garb of pious derwishes and of learned *ulemas*. Others make the speaking in a foreign language the snare by which they appropriate much of the property of those whose strength has been reduced by diseases, and who are ignorant even to-day of the methods of physicians and of the water-holes of healing.

It is strange that the only thing one can understand from 755
the jargon of these swindlers is that apparently they have devoted their lives to the extraction of the treasures of spiritual sciences. So that, when they say anything, you see simple folk welcoming them and magnifying their value. And they have no excuse for so doing, except that the roots of these follies have for long been planted in their thoughts. They have been scared by the tales of the "old women" whose

[Page 14 is blank]

755 sole desire morning, noon, and night is to forge such like absurdities, regarding which "*Allah has sent down no authority.*"[1]

Would that the young men of the present generation would confine themselves in their medical experiments to what neither benefits nor harms them. Instead of doing so, however, they repeat the experiment again and again, asserting that what did not succeed in the past was due to their own shortcomings, because they did not completely follow out the whole of the instructions in the "prescription," and as ill-luck would have it, the "prescriber," *alias* the quack, has done his utmost to improvise ingredients to which the hand of man cannot attain, for the simple reason that they do not exist.

Nevertheless, these "prescriptions" of the quacks are sometimes highly esteemed when it happens that the sick man is cured of his disease, or his health improves gradually, after his using the "prescription," or the supposed drugs; whereas the truth is that the illness passed through the normal stages [p. 6] until a cure resulted, a common rule in diseases. I may say that many of them succeed, not from any therapeutic peculiarities in them, but from the play of imagination and nervous volitional influence, which according to biologists in most recent times, has a very dangerous action upon the constitution.

000 Professor B—— mentions a famous incident. Sentence was passed upon a criminal guilty of murder. The Criminal Court handed him over for experiment to a learned physiologist who wished to prove clearly the influence of imagination upon vitality. He therefore tied up the arm of the criminal after blindfolding him, and addressed him as follows: "Your soul will depart without your feeling anything, because you are going to be bled to death." He then lanced the man's arm slightly, and poured over it a stream of lukewarm water, which the criminal took to be blood flowing over his body, and within half an hour his appearance changed and he died as if from loss of blood.

Another savant records that two youths were rivals for the love of a fascinating girl, till jealousy forced them to take steps so that one of them might free himself from the competition of the other by taking a draught from a cup of poison. 000 So they brought their witnesses (as is the common custom with Europeans in such cases) into a darkened room in which they had previously deposited ten cups, one of them containing quick poison, and the remainder other liquids. The two set to work, but as soon as they had raised the cups to their lips they immediately fell dead before they could taste anything of the poison, for, in fact, both cups contained ordinary drinks. E

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[1] [Koran, xii. 40; liii 23. Tr.]

[p. 7.] I happened to be one day in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī 757 Hospital, Cairo, in the operating theatre, when there appeared 151 a youth suffering from a complaint which did not call for an operation of more than ten minutes. He was afraid, however, of the pain of an operation and would submit to it only on the condition of his being chloroformed. So the chloroform was brought, and the operator made the patient imagine that he had taken a great quantity of it, and that he would be rendered completely insensible. Before long he fell into a deep sleep and completely lost consciousness like one who has inhaled a great amount of chloroform; while all the time the physician had not made him smell one drop of it. F

Now that we have demonstrated by actual instances the 755 influence of imagination, there only remains for us to set down here, in order, all the falsehoods and absurdities in which the "old women" trade; for anyone who buys from them comes away fleeced. And since these stupidities as a whole are named the *Science of the Rukka*, or of the "old wives," there can be no harm here in mentioning the reasons for their being called by this word *Rukka*, the meaning of which we have discovered after a long investigation and uninterrupted inquiry. It is as follows:

Rukka in the technical terminology of the "old wives" is a piece of wood upon which flax is shaken in order to get rid of any foreign substance that might spoil it. This was the practice in ancient times as well as to-day. In special circumstances, however, the word is applied to the women who are at home, whilst the men are busy in the fields. For they usually gather together of an evening to perform whatever duties their husbands or masters may have imposed on them. Then the talk goes round amongst them at those times and

● 755 they boast of the success of a "prescription," which one of them has tried [p. 8] upon one of her daughters, or on one of the members of her family. Hence the association of these "prescriptions" with the *rukka*, for according to the dictionary *rikka* as well as *rikāka* means "an old woman of weak intellect."[1] In my opinion one of these two expressions is the reason why these "prescriptions" are named the *Science of the Rukka*. For whoever considers these absurdities, both old and new, will find that they have their source in the imagination of the "old women" and in their foolish beliefs. And since the original design in the composition of this treatise was to investigate these beliefs, we now proceed to retail them to the readers of our book by way of admonition and warning.

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[1] [The author definitely spells the word as *rikka* (بكسر الراء), which is the form of vocalization adopted in the *Supplementary Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books in the British Museum*, 1926, p. 99. (See above also, p. 5 *f.n.*) The form *rukka*, however, is more in agreement with the vernacular pronunciation. Besides the above explanation of the origin of the word, Vollers has proposed another etymology, viz., from the Italian *Rocca*. (See his article in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol LI, p. 322.) Reference may also be made to Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, chap. xi. Tr.]

I

THE TAḲRÎFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. 164
It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic
intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it 757
forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats 755
a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the
morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him
before her with his lower extremities extended, while she
remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way.
Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and
rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she
squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great
force, the result of which is often death. She does all this
without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now
done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of
cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb
animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses
consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an
"operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient.
(We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault.
because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it)
Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and
ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture [278]
of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid
has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there 756
is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not 755
order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the
rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary
thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

756 choking, and that the speed with which the disease declines
755 depends proportionately upon the employment of violence
or gentleness in that "operation." But the most astonishing thing is that the sick one, if recovery be vouchsafed him, goes home loud in the praise of that "old woman," saying, "The disease was creeping about in my feet in a terrifying manner."

And what did this creeping amount to (had this inexperienced fool known) except the numbness of his nerves resulting from the compression of the spinal cord, and the suffusion of the brain? And were it not for the fact that he has but few days left to spend in his folly, the deceitfulness of the "prescription" of that old ogress would disappear. As for the lemon and the common salt, sometimes they are of advantage if the sourness of the stomach be slight, but they cause serious injuries if it be severe. And since the "old woman" who "prescribed" this is ignorant of these [p. 10] details, her making use of the salt and the lemon mingled with oven dust in curing—or rather in killing—her patient was only for the purpose of intensifying the imagination and gilding the deceit.

II

THE MASH'ŪMA

777 The common people mean thereby ill-omened (fevers).
764 Their "prescriptions" would make a bereaved widow laugh!
755 For example, if the village be under a fortunate star, and there
be found in it "the bone of the unbeliever"—one of the bones of the metatarsus—which is the stock in trade of one of the "old women," or of whoever gains possession of it, it is far ahead of all neighbouring towns and villages. A very old man, one of those who were present at the Siege of Sebastopol, related to me that he almost met his death in this siege whilst he was occupied in extracting this bone from a corpse in the firing line.

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[p. 12.] But if it be impossible to find such a bone, then the 777
"old woman," entrusted with the cure of the invalid, orders 756
one of the patient's relatives to go alone in the second part of 755
the eve of Friday into the cemetery and bring back a brick from a grave in which no one has been buried for a long time, and place it under the head of the fevered patient. It will improve his health.

The "old women" also employ for a relapse a wonderful 755
"prescription," which I have seen with my own eyes in the case of a patient whom I was treating for a violent intermittent fever. When I was by his side asking him how he felt, and thinking about his cure, I heard a commotion in the courtyard of the house. On investigating the matter, I saw a woman in one of the corners of the room where the patient was, busy muttering spells over some dry cakes of cattle-dung. Outside I saw another "old woman" of an evil countenance, with a white girdle over her black clothes, bearing on her head a sieve with a great crowd of boys behind her pelting her with stones, and jeering at her. She took no notice of them nor scolded them (because the "prescription" demands that), but continued advancing thus towards the door of the sick-chamber. Then when she reached it she began calling out, "Is there anyone here in a relapse (*mankūs*) ?" The other woman who was inside the room answered, *mâ 'indanâ mankûs walâ wag' fī rūs.* "There is no one in a relapse here, nor even with a headache," and she hit her in the face with one of the cakes, over which she had ceased reciting the spell. But the other kept on asking and the other answering her, after the same fashion, until the twelve cakes were all used up. Then the "old woman" outside carried them in the sieve upon her head and went off, I know not where. [p. 13.] I was seized with the greatest wonder and astonishment, and on asking for an explanation, was informed that this "prescription" was the cure for a relapse. As for those cakes, the "old woman" would throw them into a disused well that same night. My comment was that in that case there was no necessity for salts of quinine, and I withdrew from their midst leaving them to their folly.

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III

THE MUSHĀHARA

908 THIS is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[8])

908 The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great
751 wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects
842 a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness,
755 and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing
an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

908 THIS should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[9]
751 because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

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[8] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the abovementioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.] [903]

[9] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

957 paper containing some powder and said, "I make plasters of this antidote (*tiriāḳ*), and place them upon the piles; then they are cured by the permission of Allah." I took a little of it between the tips of my fingers, and on examination found it to be orpiment (*rahg*) one of the compounds of deadly caustic arsenic (*zarnīkh*) which the common people call "ratsbane" (*samm al-fār*).[1]

"*We took it, reckoning it pure gold, but the blacksmith's bellows revealed the vileness of the iron.*"

Anyone who has the least smattering of the science of medicine knows that this element is caustic. Barely have a few days passed after using it before a man endures considerable pain, and when he recognises the source of his mistake and the consequences of his foolish belief, he is filled with remorse.

VII

SUNSTROKE (BAṬḤAT—AL-SHAMS)

953 This is cerebral congestion from the effect of the solar rays, and the manner of its treatment according to the method of
● 955 the "old wives" is, that the key of a door which faces towards the east, and is opened counter-clockwise is procured. (There must be found [p. 21] in every village at least one house fulfilling these two conditions). The "old woman" takes this key, procures woollen cords (or braces) and wraps them round the head of the patient, using the key which is in her other hand to accomplish this. In this way she keeps on bracing these cords until she can do no more. All this while the patient behaves like a bereaved woman, lamenting, and calling out, and crying for mercy, but there is none to pity. Next the "old woman" begins massaging the patient's head. I have seen her with my own eyes after all these operations, biting the skin of the patient's forehead between the eyebrows, in a fierce manner even to the effusion of blood. For she believes that the bones of the patient's head have become

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[1] [Arsenic trisulphide. Tr.]

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164]
different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 776
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

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[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian ('aḳīḳ) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce*; and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

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[p.24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready 756 market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164] suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755 drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755 children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 776 the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [753] So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

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[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrīt*. Tr.]

755 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any
776 slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZIL*)

756 " Said an old hag, There has come to me
787 A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a " lodger,"
[539] Come ye to him, and come again soon,
776 That he may cure your sick ! "

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the " old wife "
755 enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and
776 remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients
787 with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has
378 requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means
of his " assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some 755
of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near 776
to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurd- 787
ities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2] 878

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the '*Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old 756
hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to S͟haik͟h Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called S͟haik͟h except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the S͟haik͟h, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

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[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.] [777]

[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a 778
certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did 789
not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence 791
to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not 787
confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets 791
in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that
he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl [753]
suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother [764]
went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throwing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take 756
pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted
her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon 755
as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

755 the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the
[776] mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

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791

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
[539] To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the S̲haik̲h has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the S̲haik̲h's bribe [*rag̲hwa*]).

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[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *At̲har* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief,
[755] and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a *S̲haik̲h* from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fiḳib. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands 789
leaving between them a distance which he measures with his 791
finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and 755
exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when
he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on.
Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and
that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond 755
this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. 789
One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for
the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping
and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and
continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second
measuring he tells her that ~~the~~ *Atr* has not increased, and that
it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will
result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient.
Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he
was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he
dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*,
whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of 754
spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against 832
their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition.
The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity
are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their
mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom
believes that this is simply the result of what some quack
doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect
on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of
"*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as 000

755 787 And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned, measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842 218 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies, after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: " He who desires to sell his 831
life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, 755
over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is 778
blown upon by people who are well-known for this " operation." 751
The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms [164]
(*Taḥāwīẓ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best " remedies " for barrenness is to walk over a 842
person who has been killed. This is a famous old " remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in 080

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[1] [This is Al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūsharwān. Tr.]

842 some women who are barren carry a silique of [illegible] and in
[illegible] powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in
[illegible] fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAKA

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855 THIS is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabi'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

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776 They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

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[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to 842
appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To 776
prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have
the "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake [755] ●
as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones,
both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[1]

The women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed 842
with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing 822
mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert 754
that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an
indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

Inability to have more children sometimes results from a 824
spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or 842
Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

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[1] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlah an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.] [777]

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*) ;[1] and since the sister 753
loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real 776
brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself [755] to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Ḳuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat [773] him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of 773
Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a 628
kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained 825
unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

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[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhilīya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXVI

THE TANFĪḤA

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THIS is one of the absurdities, the validity of which has 164 overcome the minds of the simple in our happy country. The people of Upper Egypt call it the *Talwīḥa* ("*swinging*"), but amongst the inhabitants of the towns, such as Cairo and Alexandria, it is called (المعوم) (sic) [Al-Mu'aumad (?)] and so also by the people of the provinces of Lower Egypt. F 755 With all its names it means the acute relaxation of the bowels, which attacks very young children. The "cure" is as follows: The "old wife" orders the child to be placed in a spacious woollen cloth which is wrapped round it several times till it is used up. Then two women take hold of the ends of this cloth, with the wretched child imprisoned in it, and turn it round following a perpendicular circular motion during more than a quarter of an hour. This, in truth, is the easiest and quickest way to kill children, because the child, who has the misfortune to be born to the person whose thoughts are controlled by the power of [p. 53] delusion and ignorance, is seized with concussion of the brain due to the wicked circular motion, and dies E from lack of breath. In the cities mothers procure drugs 757 from the "old wives"; the one which I have seen most 278 commonly used being white lead (ceruse) (or carbonate of lead), mixed with the white of an egg. Now it is well-known that ceruse contains poisonous materials. So when it is placed on the child's belly it screams with pain. Then the mother continues in the thought that his weeping is only from the original pain which was the cause of her treating it with such a harmful remedy.

XXVII

"THE STRANGER" (GHARĪBA)

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THE common people use this term generally for a number of 164 eye ailments, especially sha'ra or trichiasis.[1] Many women

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[1] [Introversion of the eyelid.]

F 181 Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

E F 181 759 554 The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or S͟haik͟h 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a S͟haik͟h in the garb of the E [291] Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as S͟haik͟h Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. E 756 ●755 We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." E F [152] He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

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[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

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the medical sciences, but were all liable to be duped by him. One of his claims was that he could extract the heart and the liver and replace them by the corresponding parts of a dog. We rejected this statement on account of its absurdity and want of agreement with the canons of medicine. When he saw our opposition he said, "Do not wonder at that for I have cured this last year 40,000 [p. 59] patients suffering from *ascites abdominalis* in Mecca alone." Then we became more sceptical than ever of his statements seeing that the whole population of Mecca is not more than 60,000, and two thirds of them have not always this disease. That would be absurd. So, when he rose to go, he invited a number of us to accompany him, amongst whom was as it happened that excellent Doctor 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Efendī Fahmī, chief physician of the Government Hospital at Assiut, and Doctor 'Abdallāh Efendī S̲haukat, head of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital.

When we arrived at his house we found him the centre of the afflicted and the refuge of the unfortunate. Crowds streamed towards his dwelling from every side so that they blocked the way for the passer-by. When we were seated he began "treating" his patients. This was after he had laid aside his robes and put on others which made him look like the successor of Al-Ḥārit̲h̲ ibn Kalada.[1] Among the crowd he had a girl afflicted with filthy suppurating scrofulous glands, so he called on his servant Ṣiddīḳ to prepare a poultice of *lait caillé* (*leben zebādī* or *yaghourt*). Then he himself brought forward a dish from which he took out a little powder of sweet marjoram which he scattered on the poultice, and put this on the neck of the poor girl, whose mother took her away to where she might roll about on account of the burning pain (after she had satisfied the monetary demands of the professed physician).

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Anyone who is acquainted with science knows that it is not possible to guard against the harmful effects of gathered pus except by extracting it by means of surgical instruments.

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After the sick-visitation had come to an end we went up with him that he might show us his chamber of drugs. We found it a spacious place with hundreds of vessels containing

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[1] [See note above p. 43.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eyewitnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

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[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārit*. At first sight it appears strange that Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [776] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian [789] symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains 164
chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such 753
as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own
medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the
sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord.

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the "treatment" 755
of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria [756]
in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning
outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the
box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses
as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites
over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time.
After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root,
and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a
fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron
pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its
joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all
these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and
the patient is "cured."

The explanation given of these "cures" is that sciatica is a 753
disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming 755
drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons
him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it.
It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence
should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and
betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks.
He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do,
the disease will return worse than before. I was told this
story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by
fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that [158]
imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of

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[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azīma*.]

753 his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after
755 this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as
158 it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

164 This means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of
the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two
750 ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a
755 huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a
908 boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of
this latter method will appear from the story reported by the
Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a
youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg
[165] stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning
to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the
nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish
individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

563 These are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose
756 origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so
far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They
854 claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by
755 extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending
753 that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad
Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his
family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

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[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are 854
his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, 755
and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, 753
before he should direct his attention to the child, according to
his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand
before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a
quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was
exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety
in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. 164
Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly
creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heavi- 753
ness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that
the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in
most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The 757
"operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the
patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the
eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the
fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar,
assuming the appearance of worms.

There is *no concealing* the dangers of this "operation";
one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. [164]
Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment.
Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a
warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent
to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the 563
Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and 759

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[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]

[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

L 752 for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

F 752 753 L 751

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

F 755 787 [197] (We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the " Masters "[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

F 756 791 " There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* F [776] [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

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[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are " possessed " by male spirits. Tr.]

[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāk*, plural of *gōka*).]

[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit., index.*]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle
anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something
of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the
Kūdīya, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of
them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall
short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets,
ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from
her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to
her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the
woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [753]
cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have
actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady
friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she
would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it.
I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I
entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large
carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352]
that no part was above the other. This was out of respect
for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may
anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to
"Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in
accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [777]
the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [562]
for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of
Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such
names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755
makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776
her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influ- 756
ences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her,
and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her
one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells
in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or Shaikh *Muḥammad*, or

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[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Huseinīya near 'Abbāsiya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

755 some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance
776 arising from girls not being educated.

756 [Description of the *Zār*.]

" First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the
755 middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the
787 house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a
782 cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock
on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood
[784] is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig.
When they were finished with these shocking actions, they
[534] surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their
hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an
[292] *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in
the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

Indian silk, its ends wrought with silver, a *ṭarbūsh* crowned 755
with pearls, and added to that a sword and dagger both 787
covered with silver. She girt herself with the sword and took 782
the dagger in her hand and bowed herself in the midst of that 792
august assembly, the instruments playing the while. Then she trembled and said: 'Peace be upon you.' They said, 'Welcome. Who are you?' She replied, 'I am the Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām.' So they played for her in the mode usual for the Shaikh afore-mentioned.

"Then she danced a merry, pleasing dance, until when the round was finished, the leader arose and massaged her. With that the Shaikh went his way. Thereat his wife, whose name is Sitt Rukkaya, appeared and entered into the body of the woman, and said: 'Peace be upon you, ladies,' in a high tone with traces of affectation in it. Then she saluted the whole company, and demanded clothes and ornaments. They brought her seven changes of silk, each one a different colour, and each one embroidered with gold and silver thread, and upon every garment a piece of gauze (*burunguk*) of the same colour. They call it the head-veil (*Ṭarḥa*). It has old gold charms on its edges. They also presented her with gold or silver worked necklaces, bracelets, anklets, collars, armbands, and rings—much larger than the usual rings—and veils, and other things as well. Then they beat for her according to the seven modes, and with each mode she put on a different dress and variety of ornaments. And in the meantime there arose [p. 77] some of those, who had been invited, and danced with her. All their fine clothing was not inferior to what we have described; that of the beggar women (*faḳīrāt*) being of silver. If the value of what was in that place had been counted it would have exceeded seven hundred guineas in ornaments and jewels, etc.

"When they had finished that, the lady who was the wife 755
of 'Abd al-Salām went off, after saying good-bye to the company. 787
Then in came the little son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām, although 782
in the bodily form of the woman. Then her circumstances altered and she returned to the state of childhood, and sat upon the ground playing like a child, and speaking like a child and lisping. But the artifice was evident. They played

755 789 782 for her the usual mode, and she was jumping about like a child until it was finished. Then the spirit went out of her to his mother. After him came in the slave whose name is Murgān[1] and began speaking in the jargon of slaves, and dancing according to his customary mode. He at length went away and the slave-woman, his spouse [the Sitt Rīḥāna], came in and adorned herself, and stood in the midst of the hall, and screamed in a frightsome manner, and said, 'I will not cook save with the silver spoon (*maghrifa*) nor will I content myself with other than the silver roller (*gandaru*). And if you do not bring them to me, I will blind her and cast upon her a disease, and will [753] not let her rise up from the earth.' Then all the ladies rose from every side and surrounded her, each one kissing her hands, and coaxing her to forgive them, which only made her more refractory and terrifying until the chief *Kūdīya* rose and made her agree to come again the following week.

[p. 78.] "At this point I asked one of the ladies at my side, 'What is this body that contains this family even to the slaves and handmaidens; and where were they formerly? And why were the man and his wife and child not present together, and the slaves standing to wait on them?' When the lady heard what I said, she stared at me in astonishment, and said, 'Be quiet, lest the Lords be angry. (Pardon, oh, my Lords!)' Then I said, 'I did not mean that. I only wanted information. Why does she not do like the rest and return whence she came?' She said, 'The devotee worked for them the necessary things except for this Lady Rīḥāna. She did nothing for her, so the latter is very angry. (Allah be praised, oh, my Lady Rīḥāna.)'

"Afterwards food was brought to which the mistress of the *Zār* very cordially and politely invited the guests, after which they all departed pleased and grateful."

755 "Healing" by means of the *Zār*[2] acquired some fame when

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[1] [This is the celebrated servant of the Jinn. The name means "coral."]

[2] [The nearest analogy to it is the Black Mass in Christendom or perhaps Voodooism. For further information consult P. Kahle: *Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten* (in *Der Islam*, 3, 1912, pp. 1–41; 189–190; 318); also the *Moslem World*, 1913, pp. 275–289. In 1931 at the Exhibition of Modern Art in Cairo, there was on view an interesting oil painting by an Egyptian lady artist depicting part of the Zār ceremony. Tr.]

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is 755 clear that those who thus imitated the " old wives " of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay 164 (caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have 752 become famous for " curing " it, the best known of them being the Shaikh ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd. He has two " treatments " for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter " method " makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is " the [753] poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last 757 year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

XXXVIII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

164 753 755 F56 THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

757 And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

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[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

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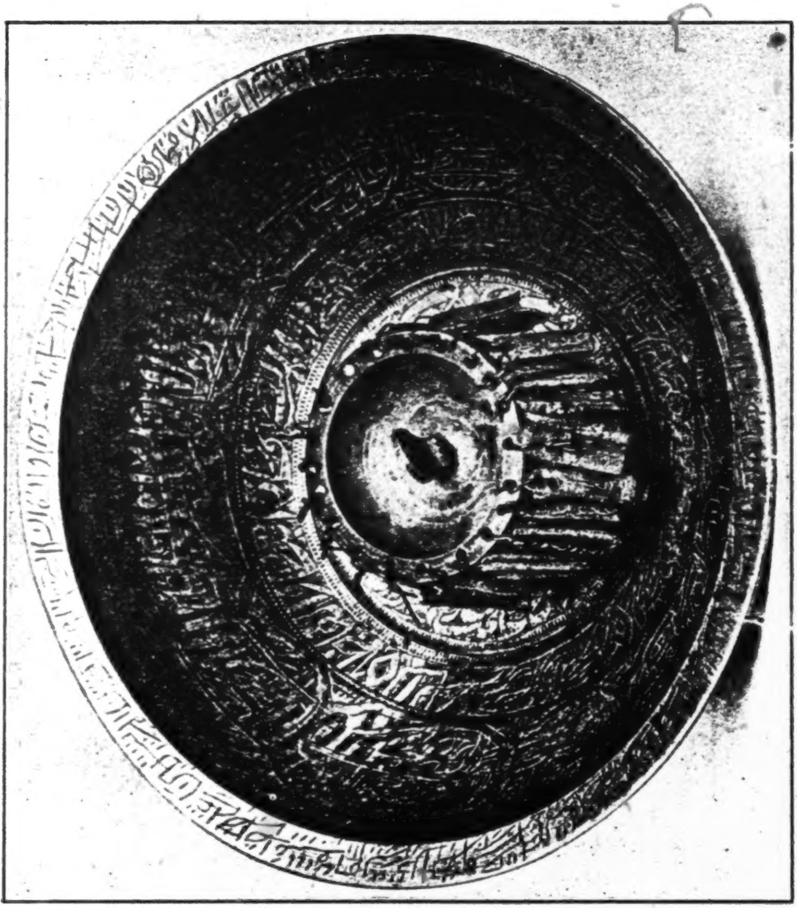

THE "FEAR" CUP (*Ṭâsat-al-Tarba*)

Facing p. 65.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

They say that if there befall a man what throws into his 164 heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being 153 struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* (" jaundice ") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the " cure " for both of 755 these afflictions is that water should be placed in the " *Fear" Cup*.[1] 789 It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds [915] or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is " cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: " We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that 753 venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they 000

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[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7¼ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2¼ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but [915] appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is *Ghafūr* (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the *Koran*, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'īl, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

278 757 another thing; you will see them coming to the cities and asking in hospitals or pharmacies for it [p. 85] by the name of *yadūr*, meaning potassium iodide. Yes, they are right as to its being beneficial, but not in all attacks of syphilis, seeing that it is proved that it is not the least use in the first two attacks. (And in particular they do not know syphilis from anything else, for they are ignorant of the diagnosis of the disease and consequently miss the cure.)

We have previously hinted at a remedy for syphilis. But in general there is no escape from consulting a physician. The patient who fears for his family, or the family who fear for him, should hasten to get away from the disease, since it is contagious.

XLII

" MIXING " (MAD͟HAḲ)

164 *Mad͟haḳ* literally means " mixing."[1]

(And in truth they are *mixed* when they err in its treatment.) It is [a name] applied in the villages to a kind of muscular swelling (or rheumatism) which strikes the muscle under the shoulder-blade, and the muscle below the spine sometimes. 755 And they " prescribe " for him who is smitten with it, that he should lean against the door of a room facing the East, with his feet above and his head below, and meeting the ground with his palms so that the weight of his body will be upon them. And he must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain in this position about ten minutes at least, until he becomes giddy (from congestion of the brain) and throws himself to the ground. The harm of this " method " is obvious and useless [p. 86] except to make those who do it like monkeys. Perhaps the patient overturns on to his back or falls upon his *pia mater* [*Arabice* (ام الراس) " mother of the head "], and there receives the reward of his act, or the result of his folly and his inability to imitate others.

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[1] [This " mixing " or ambiguity cannot be translated.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not 278 755 enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Suḳwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Suḳwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*ḳarn al-k̲h̲artīt*) consists 278 of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāḳ*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Suḳwa* is applied generally to 164 757 753 pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground. (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

164 violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). There-
757 fore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of
753 linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well
757 known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they
164 are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that
is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

757 It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend
744 to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And
where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad.*[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIKKA

164 THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow
and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for
●755 757 the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

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[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

and place him on the back of a she-ass having its feet tied, so 755
that the back of the sick should coincide with the back of the 757
ass, and one of the " doctors " beats her while the other holds the head of the patient. Then the she-ass jumps violently. It is said that there is mighty healing in her. One of the " sagacious ones " enlarged upon the success of it in his case once. When I asked him concerning the diagnosis of his disease at that time, I knew that a kidney-stone had stopped in his *Ḥālib* [p. 89] (i.e. the canal that conducts the urine from the kidneys into the urinary bladder) so the leaping of the ass helped its rolling and slipping.

But the leaping of the ass is no use in colic of the stomach or of the colon, or inflammation of the spinal marrow.

XLV

TONICS FOR THE VENEREAL FACULTY

THE seeds which are matrimonial tonics and incitements to 832
coition and whose secrets they spread abroad in cities, and 278
which many simpletons and rich people who pay their prices at recognized rates, rush to purchase from them, are all aids to the destruction of health, hastening on ruin. They are not of the least use for the object aimed at by these foolish people, nay, the result is the opposite of that, as those, who serve Science by experience assert (in spite of their being deceived at first by errors). And we do not know that true Materia Medica mentions drugs which prolong the time of propagation or strengthen the venereal faculty, unless some false opinions of certain Westerners which are considered like the opinions of " quacks " in our country.

They have said that the injection of a solution of the testicles of a fox and the Indian pig is advantageous, but experience contradicts this.

[p. 91.] And they may believe that the dye of Spanish flies[1]

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[1] [*lit.* Indian flies.]

754 at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was
241 choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his
name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not
find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ?
754 Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not
postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In
the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman,"
but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he
stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his
people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī
present ? " Consider these two fools !

[753] And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces
you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed
to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself
754 to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws
755 pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh*
(sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb*
melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours
become polluted with its elements and assume various forms.
[787] The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a
woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller
account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*,
chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated
a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she
pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy."
Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying,
" May God put out her eye ! "

754 By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy,
753 came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of
ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating "
wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned
her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia
had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint.
From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

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[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl 757
his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he 759
agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him!). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I 754
page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or
charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some
of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can
do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both
of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the 755
incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied 754
One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

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[1] [The Arabic text has *shabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

755 754 except in Allah ! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who "envied" you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory ; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an "old wife" who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the "Envied" and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the "Envied" poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

789 At the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows :

789 539
Oh, fine salt ! Oh, chaste substance !
Your mother is free ; your father, fine !
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains !
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die !

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[796] [1] [The '*Ashūrā*' is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

789 Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

955
231 ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

955
164
292 THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

755
164
292

silk, coloured red, and named the Alexandrian shirt (*al-ḳamīṣ al-Iskandirānī*). (In reality it is made at Edkū[1] and its neighbourhood.)

It has some alleviating effect on skin trouble, for on account of the softness and smoothness of the shirt the skin is less irritated. But the danger, really, is that in the village there is to be found only one shirt set apart for this purpose. Hence it becomes a means of infection and the transmission of this danger. If each ailing child had a new shirt brought to him it would be favourable for a cure, a cure harmless and often beneficial.

IX

" THE BLUE WATER " AND CAUTERIZING THE HEAD

HEADACHE (*ṣudā'*)[2] either " moving " or " smiting," is very 164 common [p. 21] in the provinces. Most of the cases we witnessed were among those whose eyes turn backwards and forwards on the occurrence of attacks of glaucoma, the pains arising from " the blue water."[3] They "cure" that ailment, 752 that is, the "moving" variety, by cauterizing the head generally. It is like the other pitiless " cures " whose purpose the quacks know is to create a new and more painful counter-agent by which the patient forgets, or pretends to forget, his original ailment for some days, on account of his preoccupation with the intensity of his new pain. But that only lasts some days until the pain of the original ailment, whose cause was not rectified, becomes overpowering now that it is away from the influence of the quacks.

I knew of a man in the village of Maḥalla Diyāya in the Province of Gharbīya, who repelled the intensity of the pain of this ailment by means of cauterizing the temple. This is an

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[1] [A village in the Delta 28½ miles east of Alexandria. Tr.]

[2] [See note, p. 54.]

[3] [The colloquial name in Egypt for glaucoma. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XI

THE "CURE" FOR ITCH AND DRY SCAB

Among the severest of the diseases that afflict mankind is skin-disease (or eczema) with its different varieties, either moist or dry. The "cure" for the dry variety among the "old wives" is to clothe the afflicted one in a garment of pure silk. 164 755

A very trustworthy person has related that he had not omitted to use everything prescribed by modern medicine, but without success. So he employed the silk garment and his ailment passed completely away. Indeed the prescription of the "old wife" agrees with what is set down in Canon Law regarding prohibiting men from wearing pure silk except in the case of itch.[1] 984

XII

THE "CURE" FOR PROTUBERANT TUMOURS

The "old wives" do not stick at any of the diseases unless it is outside the sphere of trickery to affect its "cure." They do not trouble whether by the process of imagination, either through the power of the Jinn, or the development of thought, a "cure" will result. So beware of a very valuable "cure" for tumours which appear on the skin. 755

The patient seeks out a hen, free from blemish, without a single white feather, and watches her until she lays an egg in a place unreached [p[illegible]5] by the rays of the sun. Then he brings lentils to her wit[illegible]eir seeds to all appearance the same in number as the tumours on his body. After he has emptied

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[1] [For the references to the prohibition of silken garments, see A. J. Wensinck: *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, Leiden, 1927, p. 45 f. Tr.]

● 755 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[774] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [753] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

F [64 757] imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

F [759 In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawallī, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

F [757 755 *The true explanation*. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. F [278] And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

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[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawallī* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.] E [755]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

E

750 978 applied to the wound. It resembles soft collodium[1] except that the latter is beneficial because of its transparency, which makes it allowable to witness the progress of the wound beneath it without the need of lifting it and causing the fleshy surfaces to bleed.

XXII

F

THE "REMOVED" HEART

164 753 We see the "old wives" diagnosing anæmia as "the removal of the heart and its being changed from its place as a result of an accident." They "cure" it as follows: The patient sits as in 755 the case of *Takrīfa* (see Part I, p. 19) [p. 39] and the "old wife" sits down in front of him and places her fore-finger under the xiphoid cartilage, which they imagine is "the feather of the heart" (ريشة قلب) or its gristle. Then after moving it a little the "old wife" cries out, as if she had stumbled upon a buried person, saying: Oh, my child! Your heart is removed and the "feather" (*rīsha*) is falling considerably!

The true explanation. They assert that the xiphoid cartilage is bound to the heart by strong ties so that when the heart changes it pulls it in because it is like a tent-peg holding it firm. They "cure" the patients by one of two methods:

(1) The first is an endeavour to raise the above-mentioned "feather" to the top, i.e. returning it to its original position. It is necessary to resume this "operation" for seven days, the action lasting each day about ten minutes.

(2) The second is famous for its success. The patient is ordered to go to the door of a house opening on the west, and to hang by his right hand from that door in such a way that the side mentioned carries the rest of his body. He must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain thus without breathing for a space of time varying according to the ability of the patient. When he feels he is without power to retain his

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[1] [Pyro-xylin, gun-cotton. Tr.]

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755 comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

When any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753 and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (انقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752 weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826] this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāshela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

Every day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164 mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

773 776 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *ḳarīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 753 A *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is sorry and expressed ● [755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 753 755 778 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) [1]

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) [1] A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

[1] [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirîbeh* made of *bûs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirîbeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *ḳarîneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] [825] [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *ḳarîneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *ḳarîneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *ḳarîneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarîneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *ḳarîneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *ḳarîneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.)[2] [773]

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[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

[2] [See category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

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[764]

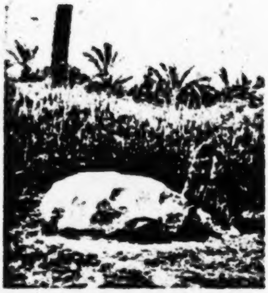

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

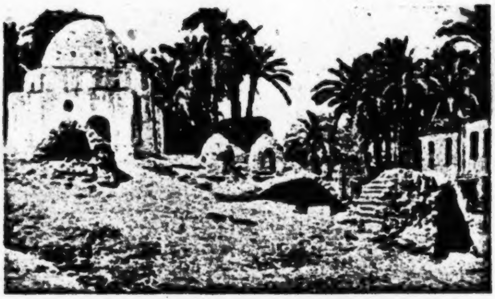

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHŪN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S *ḳarineh*.

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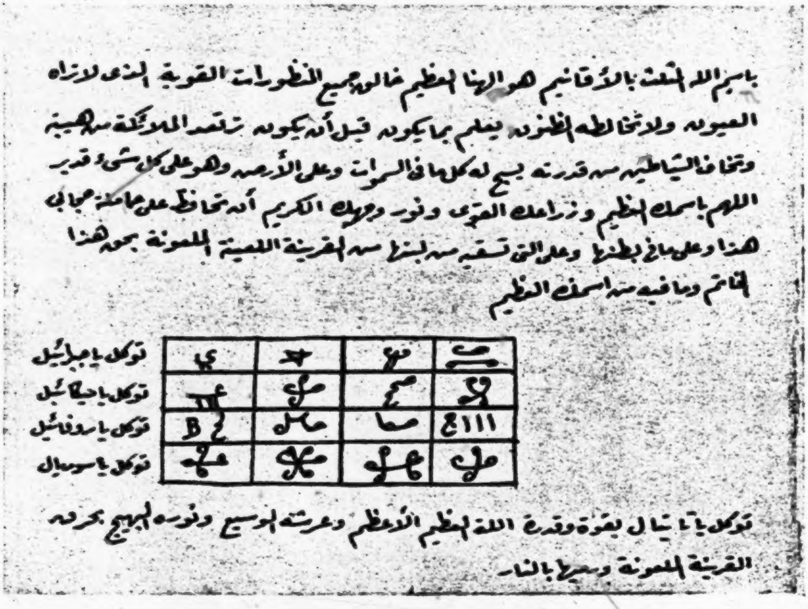
843



باسم الله المتعت بالأقانيم هو إلهنا العظيم خالق جميع المخلوقات القوية الذي لا تراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون ترتعد الملائكة من هيبته
وتخاف الشياطين من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وذراعك القوي ونور وجهك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حجابي
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من أسمائك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل
توكل يا ميكائيل
توكل يا سرفائيل
توكل يا سوريال

توكل يا [illegible] بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعرشه الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرق
القرينة الملعونة وحرقها بالنار

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE ḲARÎN AND ḲARÎNEH.

[facing p. 168]

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious 755
beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among 184
the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking 562
the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice.

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a be- 755
lief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter 787
the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person.

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar- 128
ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia.

The Elements of the Zar. 755
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1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to [158]
be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it.

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are [845
stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to 776]
stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies.

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony 755●
(1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their 789
friends and relations. (2)

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with 791
dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most 756
clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be [787]
described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits.
By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is
able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's 791
body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed 755
and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) [777
and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are 751]
determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the
day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. [326
She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the 759]
El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer).

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of 791
spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she [787
performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month 751
of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the 796]
following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony
may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes
a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to
succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give [431
presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends 585
on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, 846
in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such 787]
ceremonies.

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the [787] ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing [533] during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [535]

4. The musical band (1): ● 755

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use 787 in Zar. They can be classified as follows: 533

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use 534 drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass [535] clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted.

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:
    (i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

533
/81 cont'd/ 534

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. 755
It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/ 787

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a [171]
big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie [292]
shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535]
This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ...., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, 753
as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, ac- 776
cording to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the
spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at [755
getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's 782]
body, heart and brain.

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the 755
Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient 782
and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must [791]
be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items:

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan re- [825]
quires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc.

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be 755
worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated 292
for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a 776
red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and
blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the [301]
leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc.

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum binṭ Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bükhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attár", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791 314]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]
4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.
5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [198]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [801 262]

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(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the
Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread,
salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the
patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is
called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above
and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards
the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the
assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While
fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit
for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to
recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon
and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and
eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets
her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance
get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the
same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes
higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering.
The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power.
He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

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(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755

who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and eventually 533
falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

   Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/87 cont'd/ 755
the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief 776
of the Abyssinians (15). 171

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents 755
of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the 776
word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general 177
term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies per- [171]
formed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia. When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other, there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought
with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", es- [171]
pecially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia, in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia.

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and 776
in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, [171]
mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit. The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God

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(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217

(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257

(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/87 cont'd/

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits. 776

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balä Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

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(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion. 171 [534]

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [198] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

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(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could
have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list
of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan 600
spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.